GO SERV APPLAUDS EFFORTS TO BOLSTER HOMELAND SECURITY

SACRAMENTO—Chuck J. Supple, Executive Director for the Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism (GO SERV), applauded those California cities and counties today that were cited for launching Citizen Corps Councils, one element of the USA Freedom Corps, a presidential initiative designed to engage citizens in service to increase homeland security measures in their own communities.

"We want citizens to have active roles to play in defending and strengthening their communities," said Mr. Supple, who also serves as the Governor's liaison to the Citizen Corps, adding "because our security ultimately depends upon alert, aware and involved citizens."

Out of the fourteen cities and counties that were highlighted for their participation in Citizen Corps, four were in California— Placentia, Orange County, Los Angeles, and Redondo Beach.

To support the federal efforts of the USA Freedom Corps, GO SERV is offering $500,000 in planning grants to partnerships of public and private non-profit organizations to engage AmeriCorps and community members in homeland security and disaster relief. As of April 5, the grant application deadline, 62 organizations submitted proposals.

"The call to serve is being answered loud and clear in California," said Mr. Supple. "Californians are getting out there and getting things done to make and keep their communities solid, safe and strong."

In addition to issuing planning grants, GO SERV is convening key stakeholder groups that will develop a blueprint for communities to better engage citizens to respond to unforeseen events, such as emergencies or natural disasters. Key participants include representatives from Sheriff's departments, the Salvation Army, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Volunteer Centers, the Red Cross and Church World Services, as well other state and federal agencies. The group will be developing both short-term and long-term proposals.

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